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COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY

OF

THE RELIGION OF THE HINDUS,

ITS BIRTH, RISE, DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION:

BY

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VEDIC PERIOD.

CALCUTTA.

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A
COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY
OF THE
RELIGION OF THE HINDUS.

VEDIC-PERIOD.

CHAPTER VII.

THE VEDIC GODS.

Besides Agni, Varuṇa, Soma* and Indra; we meet with many Gods,—nay some Goddesses,—in the Vedas.†

* We shall have to speak much about Agni and Soma when we shall deal with the Vedic Sacrifices. (*See Part V.*)

† Our readers will find that except Usha and Sarasvatī, the other Vedic Goddesses are but pale unsubstantial reflections. A great European scholar writes:—"There is really only one 'great Goddess,' with an individuality, a story, and functions proper to her and to no other divine being, and that is Usha; the Dawn. Saramā is not a Goddess; still less Saranyū: 'The wives of the Gods'—the Devapatnis—are spoken of vaguely, collectively, but they are easily transformed into 'wives of the demons—Devapatnis,'—for they are in reality neither more nor less than 'the waters' or

The principals of the Vedic Gods were given the name of the Adityas,—the Sons of Aditi, the Infinite.* Dyauṣ, Varuna, Agni, Aryamaṇa, Bhaga, Surja are all Adityas. They are the same one God—One Divine Power,—named in different ways.†

The Oldest Aditya, Varuna, had a companion,—a brother,—named Mitra,—the Friend of Humanity. He is always addressed jointly with Varuna. Mitra-Varuna is one and the same,—the Great Protector of the Universe.‡ When he is separately ad-

cows" which are eternally fought for, captured, and rescued. And when this "wives" so far emerge out of their misty unreality as to be coupled with one or other particular God, they assume their husbands' names with a feminine ending, as Varunani, Indrani, Agnayi, Ashvini, &c.

* See Part II, p. p. 78-79.

† The Adityas are seven in number,—though sometimes an eighth is mentioned. (See Rig Veda. II. 17. 1).

‡ The name of Varuna is always associated with Mitra. They are an inseparable pair—Mitra-Varuna,—who drive the same chariot, think the same thought. Together they are the Keepers of the Cosmic Order and the Law of Righteousness; together they watch the deeds and the parts of men, equally all-seeing, all-knowing; and the Sun is called the eye of Mitra-Varuna as often as of Varuna alone.

We meet with Vedic Mitra in Eranian Mithra. Yasna, 3. 11. says :—"To announce and complete my Sacrifice to the two, to Ahura and to Mithra, the lofty, and the ever-lasting and the holy. I desire to approach Ahura and Mithra with my praise, the lofty, the eternal and the holy two."

ressed, he has all the attributes of Varuna attached to Him.*

When in later age Varuna was replaced by Indra, the older quiet good God Vayu, the wholesome 'cooling' breeze that clears the atmosphere, purifies the air and brings health [and life to men and animals,†—was replaced by the roaring, the maddening Marutas, the Storm-winds,—the companions of Indra,—His henchmen and Lieutenants in his war with the Demons.

One Rishi sings:—"O Maruts, spears rest upon your shoulders, ye have anklets on your feet, golden ornaments on your breasts, ornaments on your ears, fiery lightnings in your hands, and golden helmets on your heads."

Together with Indra, they are hidden by Agni to the Sacrifice. Together they quaff huge quantities of the invigorating Soma,

* One Rishi sings:—"Mitra and Varuna, mount your chariot which is golden when the dawn bursts forth; from thence you see what is boundless and what is limited, what is yonder and what is here."

† Another Vedic Deity who can be traced with certainty to a Pre-Eranian Period is Vayu or Vata, the wind. See Vedic India, p. 185.

and together they rush to do battle against Vritra whom they helped Indra to overcome.*

We meet with many other Gods in the Vedas. Though these Gods were worshipped as distinct Gods, yet they were originally but the different names of one Great God,—the names of Varuna, or of Agni. Such was Indra,—such were Vritra, Savitri, Surja, Pashan, and others.†

Rudra is the embodiment of the terrible aspects of Nature. He is but another name of Agni when He is fearful. He is Varuna,

* Great is the friendship between Indra and Marutas. There are also traces in the hymns of disputes between them. In one Hymn Indra rebukes the Marutas for having left him to fight the Demons single handed, adding that he is strong enough to conquer his enemies by his own might. The Marutas replied :—

“Thou hast done great things, Mighty One, with us for thy helpers, through our own equal valour. But we, Marutas, O strong Indra, can perform many great deeds by our power when we so desire.”

Indra says :—“By my own inborn might, O Marutas, I slew Vritra. Through my own wrath I grew so strong. It was I who, wielding the lightning, opened the way for the shining waters to run down for men.”

The Marutas say :—“In truth, O hero, there is naught thou canst not conquer. Thou hast no equal among the Gods.”

† Rig. Veda, I. 164. 46. says :—They call Him Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni and He is the well-winged celestial Garutmat. Sages name variously that which is but one.”

the stormy-sky, when it is full of thunder and lightnings. But when in course of time, He became an independent God,—He was the source of fertility and the Giver of Happiness. He presided over medicinal plants, and was invoked for the cure of diseases.* A time came when He became the most favourite God of the Aryanised non-Aryans and consequently became the Lord of Evil Spirits.†

Surja is Agni in the sky.‡ He is the Sun in its visible form. One Rishi says :—
 “The bright face of the Gods has now arisen,—the eye of Mitra, Varuna and Agni. Surja fills heaven, earth and atmosphere, the breath of all that stands and moves.”§
 Another prays :—“If thou, O Surja, at thy

* Our readers will find how in the Pouranic age, Rudra became one of the Hindu Triads and one of the greatest Gods of the Hindus. As Siva, he became the most worshipped God of all India.

† We shall find later on that though the non-Aryans adopted the Religion of the Aryas, yet they could not altogether get rid of their beliefs in spirits and demons. Rudra, being the terrible God of the Aryas,—they naturally thought him to be the Lord of Spirits. The Hindus too were gradually led to take him to be so. Therefore we find Rudra as *Bhutanatha*, the Lord of Spirits,—in the Puranas.

‡ See Part III. p. 43-54.

§ Rig Veda.

rising, report us sinless to Mitra-Varuna, we will sing to please the Gods.”*

Savitri is the Soul of the Sun—the Soul of that Soul.† He is the unknowable Divine Power that lay behind the visible Sun. He is the Greatest of the Great Gods; to Him is addressed the great Divine *Gayatri*.‡ One Rishi prays:—“Whatever offence we may have committed against Gods through feebleness of understanding, or through violence, after the manner of men—against Gods and also against men—in spite of all, O Savitri,—take from us the sin.”§

Vishnu is but Another name of Savitar, the Great God of “Three Strides.” One Rishi says:—“We can from the earth know two of thy Spaces. Thou alone, O Vishnu, knowest thine own highest abode.”||

* *Ibid.*

† See Part II. p. 109.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 120.

§ Rig Veda.

|| Ragozin says:—“One peculiar trait is attached to him and mentioned whenever he is addressed or spoken of. He is the God of the *Three Strides*. Purely naturalistic interpreters think of the expression as referring to the strides

Pushan is another name of Surja; He is the "Lord of the Path." He is the protecting guide of men. He nourishes the crops and protects the cows and kine. It was He who takes the bride by the hand and leads her safely to her husband's home.*

Twashtar is Savitar again. To express the manifold aspects of Savitar, He is addressed *Twashtar-Savita-Vishwarupa*. One Rishi says:—"Twashtar-Savitar-Vishwarupa has produced and nourished all creatures,

of the Sun-God to the three stations of his course, at morning, noon, and evening. But closer study shows that there is a far deeper significance behind the seemingly simple myth—the three strides of Vishnu cover or pervade earth, heaven, and the highest world of all, invisible to mortals."

* A Bergainue writes:—"Pushan is first of all, a pastoral and agricultural deity. He is requested to direct the farrow; his hand is armed with the ox-goad; he is principally the guardian of the cattle, who prevents them from straying and finds them again when they get lost. He is, therefore, prayed to follow the cows, to look after them, to keep them from harm, to bring them home safe and sound. His case extends to all sorts of property which he guards or finds again when lost. He is also the finder of hidden treasure—come first on the list, always. Lastly Pushan guides man not only in their search for lost or hidden things, but on all their ways generally. In a word, he is the God of wayfarers as well as of husbandmen and herdsmen. He is called the "Lord of the Path," he is prayed to "lay out the roads," to remove from them foes and hindrances, to guide his worshippers by the safest roads, as "knowing all the abodes."

and all these beings are his own. He created both the world-cups,—earth and heaven; all they are both filled with is his own.”*

When these various appellations of One Great God were becoming the names of independent Gods, the Rishis were attempting to stop this onrush of Polytheism by giving new names to their Great God,—the names, broad and comprehensive,—grand and sublime,—the names that might be called Mono-Pantheistic.† Such were Brahmanapati, Vrihaspati,—the Lord of Prayers,—‡ Prajapati, the Lord of Creatures,—Viswa-

* Bishwarupa means “Omniform,” not only in the sense of assuming all forms, but giving them.

Twashtar means “Creator.” It is he “the Omniform,” who gives their shapes to all living things, even to the unborn young of men and animals.

The three brothers,—the *Ribhus*,—are often mentioned as equally skilful “artificers” as Twashtar.

† What we have already said must have given our readers an idea of the way in which the Vedic religion became polytheistic among the masses,—henotheistic among the poets,—monotheistic and pantheistic among the Rishis and philosophers. Indra, Agni, Rudra, Surja and others became independent Gods amongst the masses. The Rishis knew them to be One and the Same, and to avoid the idea of polytheism, they tried to give new names to their Great God.

‡ Brahmanapati means the “Lord of Prayer.” Brahman in the Vedic time meant the “Hymn” or the “Prayer” of the Vedas. In latter age, those who recited these Mantras and

—karma,—the Creator of the Worlds,—Hiranyagarva, the Golden Embryo &c.*

Besides these Gods,—there are a twin-Gods,—there is also a Goddess,—the only real Goddess of the Rig Veda—who were the most favoured Deities of the Vedic Aryans.†

Usha,—the most beautiful and charming Dawn,—was their greatest favourite, their heart's desire,—their beloved pet.‡

Like a beautiful young woman dressed by her mother.—a richly decked dancing girl, a gaily attired wife appearing before her husband, or a female rising resplendent out of the bath,—smiling and confiding in

supervised the Sacrifices were called the Brahmins. In the Brahmanaic age, the Brahmins became a caste, and the foremost caste among the Hindus.

Roth writes :—"All the Gods whose names are compounded with *pati* (the lord of) must be reckoned among the more recent. They were the products of reflection " *See Bramha and the Brahmins*, Journal of the German Oriental Society, Vol I. p p. 66.

* *See* Rig Veda, X. 81. X. 82. X. 121. &c.

† Besides the Goddesses mentioned here, there were two other Goddesses,—Sarama and Saranyu,—around whom many beautiful myths have been woven. For Sarama and Saranyu, *See* next Chapter.

‡ *See* next Chapter, the Vedic Mythology.

the irresistible power of her attractions,—
She unveils Her bosom to the gaze of the
beholder.

One Rishi says :—“ Rise, our life, our
breath has come back ! The darkness is
gone ! The light approaches ! Usha has
opened a path for Surja to travel. We
have reached the point where our days are
lengthened ! The priest,—the poet, celebrat-
ing the bright, emerging Usha, arises with
the web of his Hymn. Shine, therefore,
Magnificent Usha, on him who praises thee.
Mother of the Gods ! Manifestation of Aditi !
The Banner of the Sacrifice ! mighty Usha,
shine forth ! Arise ! Lend a gracious ear
to our prayer ! O Giver of all boons !*”

Another prays :—“ Dawn with us with
prosperity, O Usha, Daughter of the sky,
with great glory, O luminous and beautiful
Goddess, with riches ! Bring horses and
cattle. Send riches to us, O Usha, encline
the kings to dispense gifts.†

* Rig Veda.

† *Ibid.*

The twin Aswinas were as great favourites of the Aryas as the dear Usha.* Like their sister Usha, they are beautiful, gracious, bright, swift, immortal, young and ancient. They are the earliest risers, and arrive first at the morning-Sacrifice—ahead of all the Gods—ahead of the sweet Usha.

They are ever engaged in doing good to mankind. They enable men to baffle their enemies, assist them in their need, and extricate them from difficulties. They bestow food and wealth,—happiness and prosperity. They are bestmen at weddings, and the Protectors of love and marriage; they are the great physicians, who heal the sick, make the lame to walk, and the blind to see.†

There is another very venerated Goddess in the Rig Veda. She is Sarāswati, often-time called Vach. In some of the Hymns Sarāswati is a River-Goddess,—the holy and sacred river of the Aryas.‡ But finally

* See next Chapter, Vedic Mythology.

† There are many stories mentioned in the Rig Veda Hymns in which the Aswinas are the heroes. They are often seen with their sister *Usha*.

‡ See Part III. p. p. 23-24.

she is the great Goddess of 'Speech and Learning—Learning in all its branches.*

A Rishi sings:—"Men with their earliest utterances, gave names to things, and all which they had lovingly treasured within them, the most excellent and spotless was disclosed. Wherever the wise have uttered speech (Vach) with discrimination sifting it as meal with a sieve, there friend knows friend it as and auspicious fortune waits on their words. Through Sacrifice they followed the track of Vach, and found her entered into the Rishis. Taking her, they divided her into many portions, and now the seven Rishis sing her praise. One man seeing sees not Vach; another hearing, hears her not; to another she willingly discloses herself as a well-attired and loving wife displays her person to her husband. One man is said to be secure in her favour,—and he is not to be overwhelmed in poetical contests;

* A European Scholar writes :—"Saraswati in post Vedic times is distinctly praised and invoked as the Goddess of Eloquence, though she never lost her identity as a river-goddess. In the Rig Veda we do not yet find her thus specialised, but she is associated with Sacrifice and the Hymns in a way leave little doubt that in later portions

another lives in unprofitable brooding; he has only heard Vach, and she is to him without fruit or flower. He who forsakes a well meaning friend, has no portion in Vach, and what he hears he hears in vain: unknown to him is the path of virtue. And even those who enjoy her with equally understanding eye and ear, are unequal in the moving of the spirit: some are lakes which reach up to shoulder and to mouth, and some are shallow waters good to bathe in. When competing priests practice devotion in sayings born of the spirit's might, one lags far behind in wisdom, while others prove themselves true priests. One sits and produces songs like blossoms; another sings them in loud strains, one discourses sapiently of the essence of things; another measures out the Sacrifice according to the rite. And friends are proud of their friend, when he comes among them as leader of the poets. He corrects their errors, helps them to pros-

of it, she already represented the eloquence of sacred poetry, possibly even the different sacred metres which were extolled and deified to such an extraordinary extent in the Brahmanas."

perity, and stands up, ready for the poetical contest.*

There is another class of Gods and Goddesses in the Veda who are personifications of Abstractions and Qualities,—such as *Sradha* (Faith), *Dakshina* (Gifts to the Priests) *Munyas* (Righteous Wrath) *Mantras* (Hymns).† There are many other Gods and Goddesses whom we see adored in the Rig Veda,—such as the Goddess of Rivers and the Goddess of Forests. A Rishi says:—

“Aranyani, Aranyani, thou seemest to have lost thyself there; why dost thou not ask the way to the village? Does terror not seize thee? When the owl’s shrill call is answered by the parrot which hops about as though to cymbal’s rhythm, then does Aranyani rejoice. Here, there is a sound as of browsing cows; there, houses appear

* Rig Veda. X. 61.

† This personification of abstractions and qualities grew much developed in the Eranian Religion. (See Story of Medea, p. p. 72). It is very scantily represented in the Rig Veda, but it predominates in the Atharva Veda, where Time, Desire, Breath of Life &c., are addressed as deified beings.

to be seen, then there is a creaking at even-tide, as though Aranyani were unloading carts. Here one man calls to his cow, there another fells a tree, then one dwelling in the forest at night fancies that some one has screamed. Aranyani is not herself murderous, if no one else assails (a tiger &c.); and after eating of sweet fruit, a man rests there at his pleasure. I sing the praise of Aranyani,—the mother of wild beasts,—the spicy, the fragrant, who yields abundance of food, though she has no hinds to till her.”*

These are the Gods and Goddesses to whom the Hymns of the Rig Veda are addressed.

* Rig Veda. X.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE VEDIC MYTHOLOGY.

When the Gods and the Goddesses are given human or other forms and attributes, when stories are told of them, when their deeds are recited, and their histories and biographies are told, it is then Mythology.*

Mythology is the creation of Poetry,—it is the work of Poets,—at least such was the case with the Aryan Mythology.†

Poets see things that are not seen by the ordinary eyes. They see life where

* The European view of Mythology is not exactly what we state here. Professor Sayce writes:—"Myths originate in the inability of language fully to represent our thoughts in changes of signification undergone by words as they pass through the mouth of successive generations and in the consequent misinterpretation of their meaning and the growth of a dream-land whose sole foundation are the heir-looms of bygone speech. Language therefore can alone explain mythology, and in the Science of Language we must look for the key which will unlock its secrets. It is by tracing back a word to its source, by watching the various phases of form and sense through which it has passed that we can alone discover the origin and development of a myth. (*See Science of Language*, p. 258-259).

† Since the days of Socrates, Myths have been explained in various ways. *See* Max Muller's *Essays*; Fisks *Myths* and *Myth-makers*, Coxe's *Mythology of the Aryan Nations*, &c. &c.

there is no life; they see relationship, where relationship does not exist; they see in Nature things that we, ordinary men, cannot see.*

When the Sun appeared in his magnificent glory below the horizon,—when the beautiful Dawn rose and spread over the earth her glorious soft light, dispelling darkness and gloom and enlivening all Nature, when all the world smiled and was cheered up,—the Vedic poets were filled with ecstasy and gave life to this beautiful and sublime scene. They saw not the morning light,—they saw not the glorious ruddy dawn,—but they saw their beloved Goddess Usha,—ever charming and ever grand,—ever smiling and ever sweet.†

* The Aryan Rishis saw relationships amongst the Gods and Goddesses. Thus Dyaus and Prithivi are husband and wife. Aditi is the mother of Varuna and all the Gods. Indra is twin brother of Agni. Vayu is the son-in-law of Twastri. The Marutas are the sons of Rudra and Prisni. Agni is the son of Dyaus and Prithivi. He is again the father of the Gods. The Aswins are the twin sons of Vivasvat and Saranyu; Usha is the daughter of the sky and she is said to be the daughter of Night also. But Night is also said to be her sister. She is the sister of Bhaga, kinswoman of Varuna, the faithful wife of Surja &c. Parjanya is the son of Dyaus and the father of Soma.

† See Rig Veda I. 48; VII. 75; I. 113;

One poet describes the Dawn as the great Goddess, the born enemy of Darkness, which to dispel and to drive away is her only business. She is the twin sister of Night,—both being the daughter of *Dyaus*. She has another sister—the Evening Twilight,—doomed to be devoured by the Demon Darkness,—the shaggy Beast,—which the bright young sister vanquishes in the morning. The poet describes his charming Goddess, Usha,—as the maiden dazzling in her beauty, attired in suffron and rosy robes, driving her golden chariot through the portals of the East, closely followed by her lover, the young Sun, whose advances she receives coyly until her delicate ethereal form shrinks from his more and more fiery touch, and she flees to the ends of heavens, and vanishes and is lost to her lover. He, in the meantime, pursues his way,—meets various foes,—the cloud-demons of many shapes—the crowling Mist-Serpents,—whom he transfixes and dispels with his golden spear; he also meets other sweet-hearts, specially dangerously fascinating *Apsaras*,—the water

maidens,—that sail the sky on light white cloudlets,—until weary, shorn of his power, yet glorious still, he sinks lower and lower till he disappears from the horizon. The Sun, after his death in Darkness, re-appears, regenerated and liberated, youthful and vigorous, in the next morning, and so on day after day and year after year. Usha too is alike to-day, alike to-morrow, ever fulfilling the fixed Ordinances of Varuna.*

Another poet calls the Sun the “Child of Darkness,” because he emerges from Darkness. He kills his own father as Agni kills his own parents. Another calls him the “Son of Dawn”, another “her brother.” Some describes him as the “Lover of Usha,” some describes him as “wedding her,”—some again “killing her,” thus to the men of an after age a very complicated relationship appeared to exist between *Usha* and *Surja*, and many strange tales were told of them.

The most important as well as most beautiful Myth of the Veda is the great war

* *Ibid.*, V. 79.

between the Demons and the Devas,—between Indra and Vritra.*.

The *Antariksha* is the cloud-land where Indra,—the Thunderer,—is king, and the Marutas,—the Storm-Winds,—are his friends and helpers;—where the clouds are sometimes actors and sometimes scenery; where precious Cows were sought for, whose Milk the long suffering earth hungers and thirsts.†

The real live earthly cow has her glorified double in the *Antariksha*; there roam the herds of dark, light or dappled Cloud-Kine, whose udders pour down their pure sweet milk—the rain,—in life-giving showers for men and animals and plants.†

*Muir writes :—"The phenomena of thunder and lightning almost inevitably suggest the idea of a conflict between opposing forces; even we ourselves, in our more prosaic age, often speak of the work a strife of the element. The other appearances of the sky too would afford abundant materials for poetical imagery. The worshipper would at one time transform the fantastic shapes of the clouds into the chariots and horses of God and at another time would seem to perceive in their piled up masses the cities and castles which he was advancing to overthrow. (See Original Sanskrit Texts, Vol V. p. 98).

† Cow was the wealth of the Aryas,—the greatest favourite among all their domestic animals. Therefore they have compared many things with the Cow,—specially Clouds. Both the Cow and the Cloud are called *Ga*.

There is nothing that looks like mountains and castles as the clouds. The Vedic Poets narrate:—"These castles, these mountains with their deep dark caves are the fastnesses wherein wicked robbers hide the stolen cows or the maidens, over whom the Dragon Cloud-Demon, *Ahi*, the Serpent, and the shaggy Monster, *Vritra*,—the Enfolder,—keep watch, until Indra's thunder pierces and tears them to pieces, and the captives are rescued and saved.*"

Sarama was Indra's special messenger and scout in his these wars with the Demons to rescue the cows.†

* We have said that propably *Vritra* was originally a *Dasyu* Chief;—as many worldly matters were in course of time transformed into celestial Myths, so was *Vritra* raised to be the King of the *Danavas*,—the wicked Demons.

Ahi is the Serpent,—the serpent-king,—the lord and master of all evil spirits. Originally *Ahi* was the snake-like clouds, and *Vritra*—the enfolding cloudy black sky; but finally they both became the Lords of Evil-Spirits. Perhaps the snake-form of Satan is borrowed from this Aryan Myth.

† Sarama and Saranyu are two peculiar Goddesses,—both being akin in nature. *Rig Veda*, X. 17. 1-2 says:—

"Twastar makes a wedding for his daughter (*Saranyu*) and all the world comes to it. The mother of *Yama*,—the wedded wife of *Vivaswat*, disappeared. The Gods hid the immortal one from mortals, and having created another just

The Panis had stolen the kine. Indra went to their rescue with Vrihaspati, the Lord of Prayers, and with the nine Angirasas. He first sent Sarama to find where these robbers had kept the kine hidden. She went on until she came across the Panis. They said:—

“With what intention did Sarama reach this place, for the way is far and leads tortuously away? What is thy wish with us? Didst thou travel safely? How didst thou cross the waters of the Rasa?”

Sarama replied, “I came sent as the messenger of Indra; desiring, O Panis, your great treasures. This preserved me from the fear of crossing, and thus I crossed the waters of the Rasa?”

Like her, they gave her to Vivaswat. Then Saranyu bore the two Aswins, and having done so, she deserted the two Aswins.”

We find that Yama is also a twin,—having a twin sister named Yami. There is a Hymn in the Rig Veda in which we find Yami pressing his brother Yama to marry her, and Yama refuses her with proper indignation.

Sarama also bore a twin named Saramayas,—the dogs,—the messengers of Yama. Rig Veda, X 14 says:—“Let the two dogs, the watchers, the four eyed, the guardians of the roads, protect this man, make him prosperous, deliver him from suffering and disease. Yama’s two messengers browe,

The Panis:—"Who is he? What looks he like, this Indra, whose herald you have hastened from afar? Let him come here, we will make friends with him, then he may be the herdsman of our cows."

Sarama:—"Ye cannot injure him, but he can injure, whose herald I have hastened from afar. Deep rivers cannot overwhelm him; you, O Panis, soon shall be cut down by Indra."

The Panis:—"Those cows, O Sarama, which thou comest to seek, are flying round the ends of the sky. O darling, who would give up to thee without a fight, for, in truth, our weapons too are sharp."

Sarama:—"Not hurtful are your words, O Panis, and though your wretched bodies were arrow-proof, though the way to you be hard to go, little will Vrihaspati care."

The Panis:—"That store, O Sarama, is fast within the rock—it is full with horses, cows, and treasures; Panis watch it who are good watchers; thou art come in vain."

broad of nostril and insatiable, wander about among men, taking away their lives. May they long let us behold the sun and give this man renewed and happy life."

Sarama :—"The Rishis will come here, fired with Soma, Ayasia and the Angirasas the nine. They will divide this stable of cows. Then the Panis will spit out this speech."

The Panis :—"Of a surety, Sarama, thou art come hither driven by the violence of the Gods : let us make thee our sister ; go not away again. We will give thee part of the cows, O darling."

Sarama :—"I know nothing of brotherhood or sisterhood ; Indra knows it, and the awful Angirasas. They seemed to me anxious for their cows when I came ; therefore get away from here, O Panis, get far away.*"

Sarama returned and then guided Indra and his Devas to the abode of the Panis. A great battle was fought ;—the Pani king Vala was killed, and the cows were rescued.†

* Rig Veda. X. 108.

† Dr. K. M. Banerjee writes :—"That the Vala of the Rig Veda was the Belces or Bel of the Assyrian Inscriptions, that the Asuras, Panis (Sanskrit Panyas) of the Veda were identical with the Phinedas of classical history or mythology, that the river crossed by Sarama was Euphrates." (*See Arian Witness*, p. 62).

Such was the way in which the beautiful and charming natural Phenomena were raised to the position of the living beings,—to the celestial state of Gods and Goddesses.* The poets robed them with beautiful garbs,—net-works of stories and legends,—of heroic deeds and celestial works.† And these simple and beautiful Vedic stories became in later age the ground-works of innumerable tales of love and war all over the world.‡

* Such virtues in a dog had never entered into Brahminical conceptions. How is this psychological marvel to be accounted for? The Zend Avasta solves the problem. The Vendidad comes with a whole chapter, the Fargard XIII, devoted to the glorification of the canine race, commencing with its ancestor Vanhapara.

"Which is the creature created by Spenta-Mainyus among the creatures which Spenta-Mainyus has created which every morning at the rising of the sun comes forth as a thousand slayers of Angra-Mainyus. Then answered Ahura Mazda. The dog with the prickly back and wholly muzzle, Vanhapara, upon whom evil speaking men impose the name of Dujaka." Then follows a catechetical dissertation on the virtues of Vanhapara and his whole species, including both their physique and morale, occupying some 160 or 170 verses, to the very end of the chapter.

† We have cited only two of the most important Vedic Myths ; but there are many more, too numerous to mention here.

‡ In the Puranas and in the Epics these Vedic Myths grew to be elaborate stories. See the Pauranic period of this History.

Darkness and Light,—Cloud and Sky,—the struggle of the Elements, were made by the Vedic poets out of their ever poetic mind as the God Indra and Devas on the one hand and the Vritra or Ahi and the Demons on the other,—but in later age they grew to be real Gods and Demons with their kings, kingdoms and armies,* which finally culminated in the Dualism of the Eranians,—the belief in the existence of the Good Spirits and Evil Spirits, ever engaged in baffling each other in the Universe.†

* The Puranas are full of the narrations of the great war between the Devas and the Danavas.

† We shall deal with this Dualism more fully in the chapter on the Religion of Zoroaster.

CHAPTER IX.

THE VEDIC RITUALISM.

From the earliest days, the Aryas had their Sacrifices.* From the simplest Rites,† they grew to be a complicated mass of Ritualism,—nay in course of time it became a great Science to compel Gods to bestow boons on Humanity.‡

* As we shall fully deal with the Sacrifices in the Brahmanaic Period, Part V, of this History,—we shall here mention only those Sacrifices that we meet with in the Vedas. We have already said *Yagma*—Sacrifice,—is derived from *Yajan* or *Yajana*,—worshipping.

† See Part II p. p. 117-28.

‡ We shall try to explain our theory of *Yagmas* in Part V. But it would be better if we quote here the opinion of a European scholar. A. Bargaigue writes :—

“Sacrifice is an imitation of the chief Phenomena of the sky and the atmosphere. Now it is a notion as old as the race, that a thing ardently wished for may be made to come to pass in reality, by performing or reproducing that thing in effigy. This strange aberration was one of those that died hardest, for we find it very much alive down to the later Middle-Ages, in the form of that spell of the Black Art which consisted in making a wax effigy of an enemy, then melting it over a slow fire, or sticking a pin into the place where the heart should be, in the expectation that the person treated thus in effigy would waste away with consumption or heart-break. The custom of executing criminals of burning or hanging obnoxious persons in effigy, when they are out of reach, is already based on the same primitive

What are the Vedic Sacrifices then? Not to speak of the Brahmanas, even in the Rig Veda, the Sacrifices had been raised to a very high status. They were performed for gaining all sorts of worldly goods,—for

idea. Sacrifice, looked at from this point of view, would be, then, a sort of beneficent conjuring, in accordance with the bright and genial Aryan spirit, while the dark and lowering Turanian nature reveals in spells and incantations for malicious, injurious purposes.

Two things are needful: light and rain—fire and water—Agni and Somā. They are produced in two of the three worlds—the sky and the atmosphere. The Devas (power of nature) are always being producing them. Agni is always being “found” in the waters: as lightning in the cloud-sea, as the Sun in the golden waters of the sea of light. The Cows are always being found and brought back to be milked: the cloud-kine with their rain-laden udders; the light-kine with their golden milk—the dawns and their rays. This is the god’s allotted work, and they do it unremittingly, following the broad path of Rita. Only they need sustenance to invigorate them and keep them ever living and ever young; this sustenance they receive by partaking of the “drink of immortality”—the Amrita—the heavenly Soma which they distil out of the watery elements somewhere in the highest heaven, the hidden world, Sanctuary of the Universe. All this work, this everlasting keeping of the world-machinery going has an object, to benefit the race of men that dwells on the earth. It is but meet, therefore, that men should try to please the Gods, keep on good terms with them,—not merely out of gratitude, but also because, should they be displeased, they might sulk and “strike”, and then where would this earth and its denizens be? Thanks can be expressed in words and gifts, and the Gods shall have both, unstinted. Only the bulk of men can feel, but not always express; are willing to give, and the consequences of giving offence might be serious. So men will do wisely to leave these things to their poet-priests as their mouth-pieces and dispensers—those superior,

getting cows as wealth, rain for the fields, and long life for their family and children. The Sacrifices were the great Remedies for all the ills of life;—they were the Instruments by which sin and death were annulled and destroyed.

One *Rishi* says:—"To the regular performer of Sacrifices, the breezes are sweet, and the rivers distil sweetness."

Another says:—"Give us, O *Indra*, multitudes of good horses, by the prospering of which we may escape all sins."

And again:—"O illustrious *Varuna*, do thou quicken our understanding,—we that are practising this ceremony, that we may

mysteriously gifted individuals, human, yet more than human "into whom the divine Vach has entered" and who, therefore, can commune with the Gods without fear or diffidence, with ever-flowing, river-like, musical speech, who are on intimate terms with those bright, beneficent but awful powers, understand their nature, their likes and dislikes, and know exactly what offering must please them and how to make such offering acceptable. But it is no more than human nature, in returning thanks for favors received to request the continuance,—if possible, an increase—of them. The thanks-giving then becomes a prayer, the thank-offering a bribe. The whole transaction degenerates into a bargain. The Gods are praised and entreated, *encouraged* to do their work and bestow boons, and it is expected they will. For even mere mortals—let alone higher beings, noble and mighty—would scorn to accept and not give."

embark on the good ferrying boat by which we may escape all sins."

The most mysterious and the most important of the Sacrificial Hymns in the Rig Veda is the celebrated *Purusha-Sukta*. Unless we read it carefully, study it seriously, and ponder over it devotionally, we cannot appreciate it,—but we can form from it some idea of the Sacrifice as understood by our ancient fathers. The *Itishi* sings :—*

"*Purusha* of the thousand heads, the thousand eyes, the thousand feet, covered the earth in all directions and extended ten finger breadths beyond.

* The European scholars consider this Hymn to be rather a modern one in comparison with the other Rig Veda Hymns.

One scholar explains this great Hymn thus :—" *Purusha*,—more correctly the *Purusha*,—the Primval Male Principle,—THE MAN,—is the Victim whom the Gods offer up and the dissection of whose body—which is simply *the material to work with*,—the WHOLE PRE-EXISTING MATTER,—with its latent possibilities for generating LIFE—produces the various parts of the Universe with their denizens, of course with special reference to our earth."

This Rig Vedic Hymn, X, 90, is also to be found in the White *Yajur* Veda,—also in the Atharva Veda, XIX, 6, and Vajshanya Sanhita, XXXI, 1-16. It has been translated by Weber, Muir, Colebrooke, Muller and many others.

Perhaps this Hymn is the best Poetical, as well as Scientific and Philosophical Theory of Creation ever written in any literature.

Purusha is this whole Universe; whatever has been, and whatever shall be, and a possessor of the immortality which groweth great by food. So great is *Purusha*, yea, greater still. One quarter of Him is all that hath been made, three quarters of Him are the Immortals in heaven.

With three feet *Purusha* mounted up; with one foot He remained here; then He spread out on all sides and became that which eateth and that which eateth not. From Him the Viraj was born, and from the Viraj again *Purusha*. As soon as he was born; He reached out beyond the earth at both ends. When the Gods prepared the Sacrifice with the *Purusha* as the offering, the spring was the sacrificial butter, the summer was the fuel, the autumn was the oblation. On the Sacrificial grass they anointed the Victim,—that *Purusha* who was born in the beginning; Him the Gods sacrificed whose favour is to be sought and the *Rishis*. When the Sacrifice was completed, they collected the fat dripping from it; it formed the creatures of air, and

the animals that live in forests, and those that live in villages, i. e. wild and domestic. From this Sacrifice when completed were born the Rig-hymns, and the Sama-hymns and the Incantations; and the *Yajus* was born from it. From it were born the horses and all the cattle that have two rows of teeth; the kine were born from it; from it the goats and sheep were born. When they divided *Purusha*, into how many parts did they cut Him up? What was His mouth? What were His arms? What are His thighs and His feet called? The Brahman was His mouth; the Rajanya was made from His arms; the *Visaya* was His thighs; the *Shudra* sprang from His feet. The moon was born from His mind; the sun from His eye; *Indra* and *Agni* from His mouth; from His breath the wind was born. From His navel came the air; from His head sprang the sky; from His feet the earth; from His ear the regions; thus they formed the world. When the God's-bound *Purusha* as Victim preparing the Sacrifice, seven enclosing bars of wood were placed for Him;

thrice seven layers of fuel were piled for Him. So the Gods through Sacrifice earned a right to Sacrifice,—these were the first Ordinances. Those mighty Ones attained to the highest heaven where the ancient Gods abide, whose favor is to be sought.”

Thus do we find that the Aryan rites were no longer the simple Soma and Agni worships. They had been already believed to be great Instruments by which Gods were in some way compelled to grant the prayers of the Sacrificers. They had become something very mysterious and very grand—which became a greater mystery and a greater complicated ceremony later on.

Thus naturally arose amongst the Aryas a class of men who devoted their life to the proper performances of these Sacrifices. They were called *Hotars*, and the permanent Priests of the family were called *Parahitas*. These were highly paid by the kings and the wealthy men of the country, and these *Priests* or *Rishis*, or *Poets* sang in Hymns the praises of these liberal minded patrons

whom they have immortalised in their beautiful *Riks*.

One *Rishi* sings :—" O friends, get up your enthusiasm ! How are we to give due praise to Shara, the generous, the liberal giver ? Many of the priests who spread the Sacrificial grass will praise thee as is meet, O Shara."

But these Hymn-makers did not spare those who failed to reward them handsomely. One *Rishi* sarcastically says :—

" I received a teamless chariot; it pleased me very much indeed ! It will have to be pushed on some how to the place where were soma drinks. Let me have nothing to do with dreams or with wealthy misers. They are equally unsubstantial."*

Thus had arisen a great class of priests to perform these Sacrifices,—which had become a Science. It is the Science,—the Mysterious Ways, the inscrutable Laws of Nature, by which this Universe was created,

* These Hymns, praising Gifts, are called *Danasthutis*. See Ludwig's *Rig Veda*, Vol. 14, p. p. 273-277, where he gives a list of all *Danasthutis*.

protected and continued. It is that very Science brought down into the world. By the performances of these Sacrifices, therefore, men could get what they wished for; they could get all worldly goods, and they could get Eternal Bliss hereafter. By Sacrifice the Supreme one created this world. By Sacrifice Gods secured Immortality. By Sacrifice Manu repopled the earth; there is nothing that could not be got by proper performances of the Sacrifice.*

KNOWLEDGE, great and varied, was, therefore, essential for the true performance of the Sacrifice; the least omission or error would be fatal. A hitch in the Sacrificial

* As we shall try to explain fully all the Sacrifices in the Part V, we do not dilate upon them here. But we beg to impress upon our readers that we do not agree with those European scholars who consider them to be foolish superstitions,—unprofitable and ungracious Ritualisms,—a tissue of impostures,—created by the scheming Brahmans for their own sole gain. We believe that the Sacrifice was not humbugism, pure and simple,—but it was a Science,—a great Science based on Scientific truths; and the Sacrifices properly performed did really bestow on the Sacrificers what they desired to get from the Gods. Humbugism can not live long; this Vedic Sacrificial Religion lived in India at least for one thousand years, and it only died when the Brahmans lost their old great KNOWLEDGE. If the Sacrifices did not produce any tangible benefits, the people would have thrown them overboard within a very short time, notwithstanding all the schemings of the Brahmans.

Rita would produce a corresponding disturbance in the Heavenly Rita,—and even the safety of the Universe would be endangered. Therefore the KNOWLEDGE of “the Right Path” was absolutely essential to perform the Sacrifice, and it is, therefore, a great danger to lay-men to attempt to perform any Sacrifice.*

From the simplest Agnihotra to great Agnishtama,† from the merry Soma-Festival to the great Horse-Sacrifice,‡ we have traces of the various *Yagmas* in the Vedas, but as their highest developments were made in the Brahmanaic age by the great Brahmans, when this Vedic Sacrificial Religion rose to its highest pinnacle, we shall defer narrating them and trying to explain them and to find out the great mystery behind them, till

* See Part II.

† See Part II, p. p. 117—120. Agnistama is the great Soma-Sacrifice.

‡ The following Rig Veda Hymn, 1, 162, will give an idea of the Horse-Sacrifice.

“When they lead by the bridle the richly adorned courser, the omniform goat (*Vishvarupa*) is led, bleating, before him Pushan’s allotted share; he will be welcome by all the Gods; *Twashtar* will conduct him to high honours.

we come to the Brahmanaic Period of this History.*

But as on the one hand this Brahmanaic Sacrificial Religion was gaining its highest development,—so there were taking births amongst the Aryas two other great Religions,—one a protest to the later day Vedic Polytheism, and the other a protest to the latest Vedic Pantheism.†

When men lead the horse, according to custom, three times around the place of Sacrifice, the goat goes before and is killed first to announce the Sacrifice to the Gods. The priest, the assistant, the carver (who is to divide the carcass), he who lights the fire, he who works the pressing stones, and the inspired singer of Hymns, will all fill their bellies with the flesh of this well-prepared offering. Those who fashion the post (to which the victim is to be bound), and those who bring it, and those who fashion the knob on tops of it, and those who bring together the cooking vessels—may their friendly helps also not be wanting. The sleek courser is now proceeding,—my prayer goes with him,—to the abodes of the Gods, followed by the joyful songs of the priests; this banquet makes him one with the Gods."

* See Part V.

† See next Chapter.

CHAPTER. X.

THE VEDIC RELIGIOUS DETERIORATION AND REFORMATION.

The Vedic Religion, as time wore on, branched out at least in four principal directions.* The masses believed in many Gods, and their religion became completely Polytheistic. With it was soon mixed up a strong belief in Evil Spirits and Demons borrowed from the non-Aryans who had by this time become a factor in the Aryan Society.† As they were falling away from their *Satwa Guna*,‡ they were giving to the Devas the attributes of the Demons, for these now grew to be their favourites to help them and to save them, and to injure and to conjure their enemies.§

* Namely :—(1) Polytheism, (2) Ritualism, (3) Pantheism, and (4) Vedicism. We call it Vedicism,—because Vedic Monotheism is not exactly what we understand by Monotheism (*See Part II, p. 95-101.*)

† The Atharva Veda is the direct proof of this.

‡ *See Part I. p. 9.*

§ Rudra,—a Vedic God,—a name of Agni,—became in later period the Lord of Spirits and Demons. The Vedic Aryas knew not evils,—but the latter Aryas attributed evils

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As the masses day to day fell away from the true Vedic Religion of their ancient fathers and embibed the superstitions of their neighbours—the non-Aryans,—so went on the learned Priests developing their great Religion of Ritualism which daily grew to be so costly that only the kings and the very wealthy men could have them performed.*

Therefore side by side grew up on the plains of the Seven Rivers two Religions,—one Superstitious Polytheism and the other Scientific Ritualism, otherwise called Brahmanism. In one, different Gods,—nay even the Demons, represented by many Fetishes,†—became each an independent

even to the Devas. To the Vedic Aryas, Yama was a brilliant God—the King of the Land of Eternal Bliss,—to the Aryas of the Atharva Veda, he is the terrible God of Fury,—demonical in nature, and fearful in shape,—in fact Death personified. Thus many Devas became but non-Aryan Demon Gods.

* Rajshuya, Horse-Sacrifice and almost all Sacrifices grew to be very expensive, some being performed for years together to complete them. See Part V.

† In the Rig Veda, no sort of Fetishes are to be found,—but in the Atharva Veda, at least one Fetish is met with. It was originally the object of worship of Non-Aryans, and therefore called by the Aryans derisively *Sisnadeva*,—but we find that it became in time the object of worship of the Aryans also. Even to-day it is worshipped all over India as *Lingams* (See Pouranic Period of this History.)

God,—each becoming the favourite Deity of a particular clan, or race, or tribe, and each being worshipped in many superstitious ceremonies. In the other, innumerable complicated Sacrifices became the chief aim and object and worship of the Religion; the Gods,—nay even the Supreme Father of the Universe,—fell away to the back ground and became the servitors of those who could perform the Sacrifices in all its strict formalities. The performers of these Sacrifices—the priests,—naturally, therefore, grew to be Pantheistic, and to them God became the Universe, and Everthing the Great God, He being Neuter and Attributeless.*

But all did not become Polytheists or Pantheists. Many there were who were Monotheists or Henotheists. Many were the true Rishis who stuck to the Vedic idea of the Great God. One Rishi sings:—

“In the beginning there arose the Golden Child. He was the one born Lord of all that is. He established the earth and this

* See Vedantic Period of this History.

sky,—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our Sacrifice ?

He who gives breath, He who gives strength, whose commands all the Gods revere ; whose shadow is Immortality, whose shadow is Death,—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our Sacrifice ?

He who through His greatness is the One King of the breathing and awakening world ; He who governs man and beast,—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice ?

He whose greatness the Himavat, the Samudra, the Rasa proclaim ; He whose these regions are, as it were his two arms,—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our Sacrifice ?

He through whom the sky is bright and the earth firm ; He through whom the heaven was established,—nay the highest heaven ; He who measured out the aerial space,—Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice ?

He to whom the two battle hosts, sustained by His support, look up, trembling in

spirit, there where the risen Sun shines,—
Who is the God to whom we shall offer our
sacrifice ?

When the mighty waters pervaded the
Universe, holding the germ and begetting
fire, thence He arose,—who is the sole life
of Gods,—Who is the God to whom we
shall offer our Sacrifice ?

He who by His might looked even over
the waters which gave strength and lit the
Sacrifice ; He who alone is God above all
the Gods,—Who is the God to whom we
shall offer our sacrifice ?

May He not harm us, the Creator of
this earth ; who ruling by fixed Ordinances,
created the heaven, who also created the
bright and mighty waters,—Who is the God
to whom we shall offer our Sacrifice ?*

When the Vedic Religion was thus being
expanded and deteriorated,—when owing to
the different countries in which the Aryas
were living, some quite different Religions

* This is the translation of the celebrated Rig Veda
Hymn.

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were starting up all a round,* naturally did the Vedic Religion grow to be a religion far from what it was at the time of the ancient Aryans. It was also natural that there should appear men who protested against these deteriorations, these degenerations. Such was Zarathushtra in Bactria, and such was Abraham of Tura. One preached a Religion, strongly protesting against Polytheism of all sorts, and the other raised his voice loudly against the life-less hard and fast Pantheism.

* Even to such an extent,—that they were called “fallen-Aryans” by the strictly orthodox Aryas.

CHAPTER XI.

ZOROASTERISM.

When the Aryan people got grovelled into gross Polytheism and unintelligible Ritualism, there arose Zoroaster,—the great Teacher, to turn them back from their mistaken path.* Though greatly persecuted,—driven out of home and hearth,—hunted down like a thief,—yet he raised his voice again and again, warning all to save themselves from Eternal Evil and to turn to the Right Path.† He said :—

“ To what land shall I turn ? Whither shall I go ? None of the servants pay reverence to me, nor do the wicked rulers of

* We have hardly any historical account of Zarathushtra,—now known as Zoroaster. The Zenda-Avesta tells us the name of his father and of his family as *Spitama*. We also know the names of his wives, his sons and his daughters,—but beyond all this, we know nothing more.

† At last one great king named Vishtaspa became his admirer and then a convert to his religion. From that day Zoroaster's religion daily grew powerful and at last became the prevailing religion of all Eran.

Though we do not meet with the name of Zoroaster in the Veda, but we find the name of the king Vishtaspa in it.

the country. How shall I worship Thee further, O Ahura-Mazda? I know I am helpless, for I have few men. I implore Thee weeping, O Ahura, who grantest happiness, as a friend gives a present to his friend."

Zoroaster preached against Polytheism; he preached his Doctrine of Monotheism, specially his Theory of Dualism. He preached Goodness, Righteousness and Truth. He preached against all sorts of wickedness, vices, sins and evils. He preached to all,—to Aryans and as well as to non-Aryans, who cared to listen to him, till at last his Religion,—though rejected by the Aryans of the Sapta-Sindhava,—was universally accepted by the Eranian Aryas. He thus proclaimed to all,—to all humanity:—†

* It is needless to say that we shall be able to give here merely the very outline of the great religion of Zoroaster. The quotation,—one of his great Sermons,—will give the gist of his religion. For the Zoroaster's great Religion, we ask our readers to read Duperron Anquetil's Zenda Avesta.

James Darmesteter's *The Zenda Vesta* &c. vol. IV and vol. XXIII. *Sacred Books of the East*.

Framji Karaka Dosabhai's *History of the Parsis*.

Martin Haug's *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings, and Religion of the Parsis*.

“ Now shall I proclaim unto you, O ye all that here approach me, what the wise should lay to their hearts; the Songs of Praise and the Sacrificial Rites which pious men pay the Lord (Ahura), and the Sacred Truths and Ordinances (Asha), that what was sacret until now may appear in the light.

Hear with your's ears that which is best, and test it with a clear understanding, before each man decides for himself between the two teachings.

The Two Spirits, the Twins, skilfully created, in the beginning, Good and Evil, in thought, in speech, in deed. And, between these two, the wise have made the right choice;—not so the senseless.

And when these Two Spirits, had agreed to institute the springing up and the passing away of all things, to create life and death, and to decree that in the end the lot of the followers of Lie (*Drujvan*, i. e., holders of the false gods and religion) should be the

William Jackson's Hymns of Zoroaster, Yasna XXXI.
Myer's Remains of Lost Empires, vol. I.

worst life, and that of the followers of Truth (*Ashavan*, of the true religion) should be the happiest mental state.

Then of these Two Spirits, the Lying One elected to do evil, while the Holiest Spirit (*Spenta-Mainyu*), he who is clothed with the solid heavens as with a robe, elected the Right (*Asha*), and with him all those who wish to do right in the eyes of *Ahura-Mazda*.

And to his side come with *Khshathra*, *Vohu-mano* and *Asha*, and *Aramaiti*, the eternal, who made the earth her body. In these mayest thou have a share, that thou mayest-out do all others in wealth.

The *Daevas* also made not the right choice (between Good and Evil), for, as they were debating, folly overcame them, so that they chose the Worst Mind (*Ako-mano*), (opposed to *Vohu-mano*). And they assembled in the house of Violence (*Aeshma*) to destroy the life of man.

But when the vengeance comes for their deeds of violence, then, O *Ahura-Mazda*,

Rawlinson's The Five Great Monarchies.

surely the sovereignty will be given by they Good Mind to those who will have helped Truth (Asha) to overcome Lie (Druj).

Therefore will we belong to those who are in time to lead this life on to perfection. Grant us then, O Mazda, and ye Gods, your assistance, and thou also, O Asha, that every man may be enlightened whose understanding, as yet, judges falsely.

For then the blow of destruction shall fall on the liar, while those who keep the good teachings will assemble unhindered in the beautiful abode of Vahu-mano, Mazda, and Asha.

If, O men, you lay to your hearts these Ordinances, which Mazda instituted, and the Good and the Evil, and the long torments which await the followers of falsehood, and the bliss that must come to the holders of the True Faith, it will go well with you."

Mazdayasnians and Daevayasnians, the "Worshippers of God and the Worshippers of the fiends," such is the division of mankind according to the Zoroastrian Faith.

Saye's *The Ancient Empires of the East*, &c. &c. &c.

There can be no middle way. Whoever is not with Mazda is against Him. Whoever does not enlist to fight the good fight with Spenta-Mainyu, the Spirit who is All Life, necessarily swells the ranks of Angra-Mainyu, the Spirit who is All Death. The material world is divided between them, and its various phenomena are but the visible manifestation of the war they wage against each other. That war has its parallel in the Spiritual World. There the battle-ground is in every man's own soul, and the stake is every man's own soul. But not without the man's consent can the stake be won by either, it is with him to choose. And as he chooses and abides by his choice, so will it fare with him. When his day of combat is done, and he either crosses the Bridge of the Gatherer, and passes into the abode of God that dwells in Endless Light, or misses his footing, and is dragged down into the "Abode of Lie," which is Endless Darkness.*

*Yasna, Chapter XXX. One European scholar writes:—"We have here the essence of Zoroasterism in its sublime simplicity, its absolute purity, as it shaped itself in the mind

But Zoroaster did not altogether throw overboard the ancient Aryan Vedic Religion, nor did he discard the worship of Agni and Soma, the great Gods of the Aryas. To both as Hoema and Atar much honour was paid, and Sacrifices were offered by his followers. His great God, his Lord Ahura, is but Vedic Varuna, his Mithra is Mitra, Yima is Yama. Even Vritraghra as Vere-thragna is praised. He did not even discard the Vedic Mythology; he simply improved upon it. * His Dualism of the Spirit of Goodness and the Spirit of Evil is but

of the founder. All further developments as given in the Gathas may well be said to be but commentary.

* We are sorry we cannot give a detailed account of the Eranian Mythology and Ritualism,—for they themselves would form a big Volume. But the following quotation will shew how the Vedic Mitra became Eranian Mithra, the God of Light, the Opposite Force to Evil.

“Mithra is Light, and Light is all-pervading; Therefore Mithra is all seeing and all-knowing; Ahura Mazda gave him a thousand sense and ten thousand eyes to see; he is the undeceivable watcher of men; or else he has ten thousand ears and ten thousand spies. Mithra is Light, and Light is Truth, and Truth is good. The Dævas are Darkness and Darkness is Lie, and Lie is evil.”

This is how the Eranian Dualism was formed on the Aryan Mythology.

For a detailed account of the Religion of Zoroaster, we refer our readers to the books mentioned in p. 132.

the spiritualized improvement of the Vedic Dualism of the Devas and the Danavas.*

But he placed the Vedic Devas and the Danavas into one category of *Dævas*,—the Devils,—the Evil-Spirits. Not only because the Aryan people of that age attributed many attributes of the Demons to their Devas, but because they worshiped these innumerable Gods, forgetting their ancient great God ASURA, and committing every sort of wickedness, sin and vice. His attempt was to bring the Aryas to their original purity.† His Religion was a reformation on the latter day Vedic Polytheism.

But alas, his grand Religion met the same fate as that of the early Aryans! It too had to pass through many vicissitudes.

* There is a good deal of difference of opinion amongst the European scholars about the schism between the Aryan and Eranian Religions. Some suggest that there was a great fight over this matter between the two branches of the Aryan race. Others say that the two Religions are but two natural developments of the original ancient Religion. We incline to agree to the latter, but not fully. Our opinion is that the Eranian Religion was not the development of the old Aryan Religion, but an attempt of reformation made on the part of Zoroaster of the latter day Polytheism of the Vedic Religion. Therefore we place the age of Zoroaster not later than 2000 B. C., probably a century and two earlier.

It too had to encounter many influences, specially the influences of their western neighbours, the Accadians and the Assyrians. Climatic influences,* changes of

* The physical aspects of Iran and those of the Punjab were quite different. Max Müller in his "Ancient History," thus describes the land of Iran.

"The centre of Iran was formed of a vast desert; to the north and south stretched far away arid tablelands; favoured districts might almost be called oases. Immediately on the west of fertile valleys and slopes bordered endless steppes; blooming plains, densely shaded by groves, were encompassed by sandy wastes. If the mountainous country of the north-east possessed the steepest forests, the richest pastures, the snow fell early, the winters were severe. If the vegetation was most luxuriant along the edge of the Caspian sea, thousands of venomous reptiles dwelt in the marshy low lands. The people of Iran suffered not only from the heat of summer, but also from the cold of winter; the scorching winds of the desert were not more to be dreaded than the snow-storms of the northern tablelands. Here pastures and corn-fields were buried under snow during many weeks; there sand-drifts destroyed culture. Here the camels died of cold and slipped down the icy steeps into precipices; there the winds from the desert choked up the wells and springs. Here was winter, "with the worst of its plagues, cold for the waters, cold for the earth, cold for the trees" (Vendidad, I., 9-12), there the cattle was tortured by gad-flies in the heat; here bears and wolves invaded the herds, there snakes had to be guarded against and the fiercer wild beasts. Life was in this land a fight against heat and against cold, a fight for the preservation of the flocks; and as soon as single tribes had begun to settle in the more favoured districts, and to attend to agriculture, it became a fight against the desert and draught. Here the dry soil had to be supplied with water; there the crops had to be protected against the hot winds and sand drifts from the desert. To these hardships and contrasts of Nature must be added the contrast between the populations. Most of the native tribes of the central tableland, and many of those who held the surrounding

language, different manners and customs did the rest. And the most sublime religion of Zoroaster expanded* into the com-

high-lands, were debarred by the nature of the country from leading any life but that of nomadic herdsmen. To this day a great portion of the population of Eran consists of nomads. So while the settlers laboured hoavily; in the sweat of their brow, the others moved about idly with their flocks. There could be no lack of raids into the agricultural districts, of plundering and robbing."

Such differences of physical aspects of the two countries naturally made much changes both in the physic and character of the Eranians. They were no longer the Aryas of the Seven Rivers. Naturally, therefore, their religion too much changed from that of the Aryas of India;—character plays a very chief part in the religion of a nation. The Christian Negroes of America are not the same Christians as the Christians of Europe.

* Our space is too limited to give a full account of the great Religion of Zoroaster. But perhaps our readers are aware, the Veda of the ancient Eranians is the Zenda-Avesta, meaning "The Law and Commentary." It contains four Books and is written in various ancient Eranian languages. These Books are :—

I. The Vendidad, corrupted from a much longer word which means "the law against the Daevas" (*i. e.* the Demons). It is, properly, a code of laws and regulations tending towards the establishment of righteousness and the defeat of the Powers of Evil, but includes some interesting mythical legends, traditions, and digressions of various sorts.

II. The Vispered : invocation to all the divine and holy beings, who are honoured under the title of "Chiefs of the Good Creation" and invited to assist at the Sacrifice that is preparing—vary much in the form of a litany.

III. The Yasna, "Sacrifice," *i. e.* the prayers and texts—Manthras—which are to accompany the very minute and complicated performances that compose the Sacrifice, in

plicated priest-ridden Religion of Mazdism
of Media.*

presence of the sacred fire, to which are presented offerings of meat, milk, bread and fruit, in some quantities, and the juice of the Haoma, which is pressed out on the altar itself with many strictly prescribed ceremonies. The Gathas are comprised in the Yasna and form twenty-five chapters of it. It also contains forms of confession, invocations, praise, exhortation &c. These three divisions, Vendidad, Vispered; Yasna are not recited separately, but intermingled, as suited the progress of the liturgy. When written out in this particular liturgical order, they form the Vendidad Sadeh.

IV. The Yeshts, hymns of praise, containing much interesting mythical matter, indeed distinguished altogether by a polytheistic and mythological character, entirely foreign to the early stages of Zarathushtra's religion, and clearly shewing a far later and greatly corrupted period. These Yeshts, together with a few fragments, short prayers for each day of the month and others, from the Khordeh or Lesser Avesta, perhaps, held somewhat less holy than the other three books as not being in liturgical use at daily worships. It is to be noted that, for the same reasons, very few of the Yeshts have been translated into Pehlevi, so that scholars, in reading and rendering them, have the additional difficulty of being entirely unassisted by tradition. *See Media*, pp 30-31.

* The same was the case with the Aryan Religion, as traced in this History.

For a detailed account of the latter day Mazdism of Media, *see* books mentioned in p. 132.

Magis were priests,—this Religion was no doubt based on the Religion of Zoroaster,—but became full of ritualism, priest craft, magic and incantations.

CHAPTER XII.

THE END OF THE VEDIC PERIOD.

Zoroaster was not the only Reformer that appeared to stop the on-rush of deterioration that came over the Aryan Religion all over the Aryan land. Zoroaster raised his voice against Polytheism,—but there rose another who strongly protested against Pantheism,—who preached the Religion of a Personal God,—a Living and Loving God.*

But he too fared the same fate as did Zoroaster. He too was greatly persecuted and had to leave his home and hearth. Because he stood up against the lifeless and unintelligible Pantheism, because he strongly protested against Vedic Ritualism,—he was named *Abrahma* or Godless and Prayarless.

* Though there is no mention of Abraham in the Vedas, yet we find his story distinctly mentioned in the Purans. *Abrahma* was the son of a king, named Tura, and it is mentioned that he had to leave his country with his sheep and cattle and he went westward. In the Hebrew records we find Abraham came to the land of the Israelites from the east, and he was not one of them. We know very little else about Abraham.

He was driven out of his home, though he was a king's son and had to rove about as an outcast. He journeyed with his sheep and cattle,—his family and children,—west and west,—till at last he met with a friendly tribe,—the great Hebrew race,—who welcomed him,—adopted his Religion, and followed his teachings.

In the meantime in the table-lands of Eran and on the plains of the Punjab,—the Aryan Religion daily expanded,—expanded in many directions. In Persia and Media, it become Mazdism, and in India it become Brahmanism; but in both the countries

But we might mention that we are not the only person that say that Abraham was an Aryan and his Religion was a protest against Aryan Pantheism. Some of the European scholars also support our view, notably, Mr. Stone. (*See his Cradleland of the Aryans*).

If we admit that Zoroasterism is the natural protest against latter day Aryan Polytheism,—we must say that also there must have been made a protest against Aryan Pantheism. We can find this only in the Religion that Abraham preached. And again there is no proof to show that Abraham was a Hebrew or that the Religion that Abraham preached,—the Religion of a Personal God,—was the natural growth of the Hebrew Religion; this much can only be said that the Hebrews had a Religion almost akin to what Abraham preached, or else he would not have been welcomed by them. Any how in our humble opinion Abraham was an Aryan and his Religion was a natural growth of the Aryan Religion.

there were many great men who continuously tried to preserve the purity of the Ancient Faith.

The world is bound to change, and to change in various directions;—the Religions are no exceptions. The Religion of the Aryans changed and changed in different ways. It will be our attempt to trace and to narrate these changes in the pages of this History as we proceed from period to period,—from developments to deteriorations,—and from degenerations to reformations.

Such was the end of the Vedic Period. With the Brahmanaic Period we enter into quite a new field.*

* See Part V.